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A LOVING TOKEN

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Introduction

When a daughter marries and leaves the home of her parents to join the home of her husband and her "in-laws" there is a feeling of sweet sorrow in the hearts of her parents. Whilst they are happy that they have nurtured a daughter and prepared her to take on the responsibilities of her own family together with her husband, the very thought of parting is shadowed with sorrow.

At such a moment the parents would like to give all that they can so that their daughter may be happy in her new environment. Among the things that could be given perhaps the most treasured are words of advice as guide lines for her future happiness in her husband's home.

This booklet contains such thoughts with a feeling of personal touch and is presented in simple language. It reminds the bride of the various vows, hopes, aspirations, wishes and blessings of Paramatma. The significant mantras of the wedding ceremony are also briefly explained so that this booklet would remain a life-long companion to her, and especially in times of distress it

would renew her strength and give both herself and her husband faith and courage to overcome all storms and make a success of their marriage life.

I am indebted to Mr. Dasarath Bundhoo of Pietermaritzburg (South Africa) for translating my original in Hindi into English.

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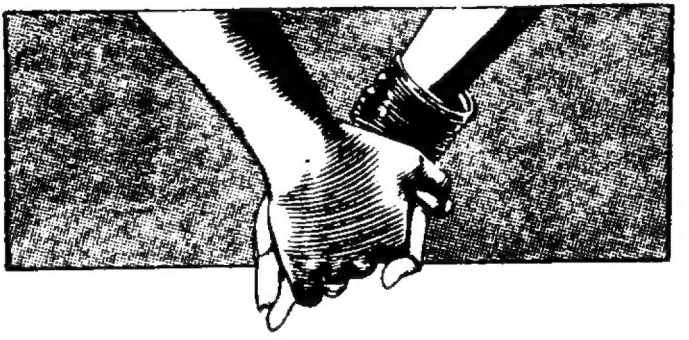
—Swami Deekshanand Saraswati



Presented to

_____

(daughter of)

and

_____

(son of)

on the auspicious occasion

of their marriage

on , the

_____

Ten Principles of the Arya Samaj

1. The Primordial Root — the Eternal Unseen Sustainer— of all true knowledge and of objects made known by true knowledge—aye of all these—is the Supreme God.

2. God is Personification of Existence, Intelligence and Bliss. He is Formless, Almighty, Just, Benevolent, Unborn, Endless and Infinite, Unchangeable, Beginningless, Uncomparable, Support of all, Lord of all, All-pervading, Omniscient and Controller of all from within. Undecaying, Imperishable, Fearless, Eternal, Holy and Maker of the Universe. To Him alone worship is done.

3. The Veda is the Scripture of true knowledge. It is the paramount duty of every Arya to learn and teach Veda, to hear it, read and to recite it to others.

4. We shall ever be ready to embrace truth and to forsake untruth.

5. All acts should be done in accordance with Dharma, after deliberating what is Right and Wrong.

6. The prime object of the Arya Samaj — Vedic Church — is to do good to the world, that is, to promote physical, spiritual and social good of every sentient being.

7. Our conduct towards all should be guided by Love, Righteousness and Justice.

8. We should dispel avidya (nescience) and promote vidya (science) spiritual and physical.

9. No one should be content with promoting his own good only; on the contrary, he should look for his good in promoting the good of all.

10. All men should subordinate themselves to the laws of society, calculated to promote the well-being of all; they should be free in regard to the laws for promoting individual well-being.

A LOVING TOKEN

Daughter,

They say that this is an auspicious occasion. The time is opportune but it is a painful experience and only he understands who is affected, how the parents at this moment are afflicted.

It is the parting from one's own bosom;
It is the shifting of the light from one's home.
This is not just the shedding of a tear,
But it is the sign of pain for one so dear;
The flow of a daughter's love has turned to water,
The intellect also is now just water.
Though fulfilled has been my ambition,
But attachment has overtaken my patience.
This is the occasion to give you a gift;
Should it be fine clothes or ornament ?
If possible I would give you a necklace of gold,
Not once only but in a hundred fold.
If I do not give, it will be a matter of shame;
So take what I offer child, in my name.
No ruby or diamonds, nor riches,
Nor garland of twigs studded with flowers;
Should I to the jeweller or gardener myself bind ?
No, my ornaments are not for body but for the mind.
Therefore if you accept my percepts as jewel,
Your life will ever be a shining example.

Most important step

Child, it is not necessary to mention that in the ladder of your life the most important step has begun. It is essential to keep this step firm and steadfast so that it does not falter or retreat. During the wedding ceremony just a moment ago you were asked to place your foot on a stone. It was to remind you of this firmness. Let this quality uphold the dignity in your married life without there ever being a transgression; neither should any other person dare to misguide you.

Great in weight

The ashram or stage in life towards which you have turned is great in dignity. Even the Rishis in their estimation pronounced this as being equal in weight to the other three ashrams. Manu Maharaj has given a good analogy of this: "As all life is dependent on air, all the other ashrams look forward to the ashram of the householder for existence". As all flowing rivers take refuge in the sea, similarly the three other ashrams take refuge in the householder's ashram. As it is the responsibility of the householder to feed and clothe those of the other three ashrams, he is regarded as occupying a position of distinct importance.

The other half of man

Now what is your position in this ashram which has been praised so much ? It is essential that you should know this well that your position is that of a wife. Till such time that a man has the help of a wife, he is said to be incomplete. How can a person who has attained only half his form be called complete ? The praise of a woman in the words अर्द्धम् भार्या मनुष्यस्य *ardham bharya manushyasya* is sufficient for her. Even in the *Puranas* the description of अर्द्धनारीश्वर *ardhanareeshwar* which is highly imaginative, is not just a fairy

tale. The reference is a true description of the inseparable nature of the husband and wife. The husband and wife are the two banks of the householder's river that is full and overflowing with water, signifying the offspring from which the national and social fields receive their irrigation to keep them ever fresh and green, and at the same time providing flowers and fruit in abundance.

The warp (ताना) and woof (बाना)

The husband and wife are the interwoven threads of a fabric with the husband being the warp and the wife, the woof. The body is the fabric made up of the warp and woof. The *Atma* clothed in this fabric is called the son. It is difficult to say which, between the warp and woof, has the greater importance. It could only be said that the one is the complement and support of the other. When the woof becomes interwoven it forms the fabric which is used for all forms of clothing, sheets and rugs. The wife naturally surrenders herself to her lord and husband and in it she finds her true blessings. She cannot separate her individuality for that would be a crime. She has to surrender her wealth, desire and rites into that which belongs to her husband. This is her rightful position. Lord Manu has also sounded this note: न स्त्री स्वातंत्र्यमर्हति *Na stri swatantrayamarhati.*

Heaven and earth

In the Vedas the description by the Divine Poet of the union between husband and wife is unique. Just a moment ago the bridegroom himself, during the course of the wedding ceremony, uttered these words, "I am heaven; you are the earth. As these two face each other and are drawn towards one another at all times, so shall we be attracted towards each other". At the altar of the ceremony the two were brought

together with a knot. It was not just the tying together two pieces of cloth, but a bond of two hearts that can be likened to the gravitational link between the sun and earth.

Son is like the moon

As the earth makes the sun its central point and revolves around it, in the same manner a wife makes her husband the central figure of her life and keeps revolving round him. As the earth is lit up by the light of the sun, a wife should become enlightened through the vows and pledges of her husband and allow her righteousness to pass on to her son. The husband is like the sun, the wife is like the earth and the son is expected to be like the moon. Where the sun throws its rays directly on the moon, the earth's reflected light towards the moon is soft and serene. In the son the best qualities of both the parents are reflected. Truth is the quality that provides the true bond between the husband and wife. This is the meaning that is contained in the mantra that has just been uttered by the bridegroom: बध्नामि सत्यग्रन्थिना मनश्च हृदयञ्च ते *Badhnami satya granthina manascha hridayancha te.* (Brahman 1/3/8).

Two outer coverings of a shell

The two mantle-flaps of an oyster shell together encase the pearl. Thus the husband and wife are the two mantle-flaps of the home where the pearl-like son is nurtured. The separated mantle-flaps of a shell cannot produce a pearl. Therefore there must not be any cause of dissension and separation between the husband and wife. The Vedas say: मा वियौष्ट *Ma viyausta,* meaning, never separate.

Two wheels

The cart must have two wheels for it to move. A cart could neither stand nor move on just one wheel. Therefore in a home the husband is one wheel and the wife is the other. In this manner one could easily establish the position held by a wife.

Two wings

Just as a bird flies to great heights with the support of both its wings, the household bird with both its wings, representing the husband and wife, could fly to great heights and reach heaven.

Confluence of two streams

At the altar of the wedding ceremony the bridegroom uttered words which meant that just as the waters of two separate streams come together and mix, their two hearts had met and attained oneness. Just as the waters of the two streams having come together could not be separated, the two individuals belonging to different homes, being united by the bond of matrimony, could not part from each other. Similarly there is a merging of hearts between the members of the two families: समापोह्रदयानि नौ *samapo hridayani nau* (10/85/47).

Water and milk

When water is mixed with milk it becomes part of the milk and it is sold as milk. A bride in similar manner surrenders her individuality to her husband and increases her own prestige and status.

Word and its meaning

The great poet Kalidas gave a very interesting description of the oneness of man and wife. For example, as a noun and its meaning could not be

separated, the oneness of the husband and wife is in a similar category. The man is a noun and his wife becomes its meaning. वागार्थाविव सम्पृक्तौ *Vagarthaviva sampriktau.* (Rv. 1/1). In the Atharva Veda Indra has been asked to bless the married couple so that they would be bound with affection as firmly as a swan and its partner. According to the Vedas a woman has been termed the ever-flowing fountain of the essence of life. How could we ever describe her virtues? Just a while ago, during the ceremony, we heard the inspiring words: यस्यां भूतं समभवत् यस्यां विश्वमिदं जगत् तामद्य गाथां गास्यामि स्त्रीणां यदुत्तमं यशः) *Yasyam bhootam samabhavat, yasyam vishwamidamjagat tam adya gathaam gaasyami strinaam yaduttamam yashaha.* (Pg. 1/7/2). It is true that woman is the shaper of our past and present. Therefore it is imperative that her glory be praised in our cultured society. She has been the mother of our glorious past by having given birth to such illustrious persons as Manu, Vasishtha, Vishwamitra, Yajyavalkya, Dileep, Bhagirath, Raghu, Rama and many other rishis and kings. Even in this age she has given birth to Dayanand and Gandhi. It is therefore that we sing in praise of the *shakti* of womanhood.

Different names

Child, for you to be honoured in the status of a wife, you will have to take note of all the circumstances amidst which you may find yourself. The first step on the threshold of marriage gives you the name *vadhu*, or bride. At the moment that your hand was offered by your father to the bridegroom who accepted it, you assumed the name *grihini*. Whenever you participate with your husband in any religious of noble duty, the term *patni* will be used to refer to you. As time goes on you will be given various other names in

accordance with your duties and obligations, such as ***bharya, jaya, dhatri*** and ***dara*** among many others.

Duty according to name

Where the names are different the responsibilities of a wife also differ. As in the case of the name ***vadhu***, her duties take on a greater family significance. The word ***vadhu*** is so endearing and dignified that as she enters the home of her husband, all the members of the household, both big and small, call her ***bahurani***. It is a very pleasing name; therefore when a bride is addressed as ***bahu*** or ***bahurani*** she ought to feel very delighted indeed. This is something to be experienced. I am confident that you will be worthy of this name and that you would adorn it with humility and dignity. This precious ornament with which you are adorned is neither produced by the goldsmith, nor purchased. It is characterised by modesty and a noble demeanour.

The poet says:

If you accept this adornment truly,
Your life will be ideal and exemplary.

Daughter, there was a wealthy man named Dhananjaya who in bidding farewell to his daughter, Vishaka, adorned her with the most precious jewels. They comprised soul-elevating words of wisdom:

अन्तो अग्गि बहि न नीहरितब्बो

1. Do not take fire outside from inside the home; that is, whatever is spoken in secret by your mother-in-law or other lady-members of the family, should not be mentioned to the maids and servants.

बहिः अग्गि अन्तो न पवेसेतब्बो

2. Do not bring into the home fire from outside. Whatever the maids, servants or neighbours have been discussing should not be used as gossip within the family. In the same manner whatever has taken place at your parents' home should not be brought to your husband's home and whatever has been spoken at your husband's home should not be carried to your parents' home. Such talks create enmity. Always remember that you could become the victim if you take part in idle talks.

Note the poet's words:

If a woman speaks ill of anyone,
You must never give your opinion;
It is wiser than to be silent awhile;
And not be the object of words most vile.
All the blame will come on your head,
And at home you would have trouble earned.

ददन्तस्स दातब्बम्

3. Those who return, give only to them.

अदन्तस्स न दातब्बम्

4. Do not lend to those who do not return, but there are exceptions.

ददन्तस्सापि अदन्तस्सापि दातब्बम्

5. Give to those who give and also give to those who do not give; particularly close friends of the family should not be denied the favours that could be done.

Draupadi had given the same advice to Satyabhama; that is, the friends of one's husband should be treated with hospitality.

सुखं भुञ्जितब्बम्

6. Eat with relish, but do not do so before you have served your elders, guests, or a recluse. Do not eat anything that you have not served to the others.

सुखं निसीदितब्बम्

7. Occupy a seat that gives dignity. Do not take the seat of the elders, or occupy a higher seat in their presence. Allow them to be seated before you take your place.

सुखं निपज्जितब्बम्

8. Do not go to sleep before the elders of the house and your husband have retired. Ensure that your duties to them for the days are done.

अग्गि परिचरितब्बो

9. Let the fire be lit and perform *agni-hotra* daily. The fire should be the centre of the family circle. If the central cog is good, the spokes around it would keep firm. The tradition of the *agni-hotra* ennobles the family.

अन्तो देवतापि नमस्सितब्बा

10. All the senior members of the family are worthy of being honoured.

Daughter, even the village songs sing in praise of the daughter-in-law. From these songs all daughters-in-law could take advice. In one of the couplets a father-in-law asked his daughter-in-law what sort of fasts and vigils she had performed that she had been blessed with such a lovely son. The daughter-in-law replied that she did not disobey her mother-in-law; she had not ignored her sister-in-law; nor had she

carried tales. That was the reason for the child being so beautiful.

Therefore:

Do not ignore the advice of your mother-in-law.

Do not ignore your sister-in-law.

Do not carry tales.

In your day-to-day conduct be dignified and always try to win the respect of your elders. If one does not do this, according to Vidur, one is seeking disaster. To degrade one's mother-in-law is sinful. A daughter-in-law should appear properly dressed in the presence of her elders. She should not try to give orders in their presence.

Daughter, here are some wise rules taken from Yajyavalka:

नानुक्ता निर्गच्छेत्

1. Do not leave the house without permission.

नानुत्तरीया

2. Do not go out without putting on your outer garments.

न नाभि दर्शयेत्

3. Do not expose the abdomen.

आगुल्फात् वाससः परिदध्यात्

4. Decorum should characterise one's dressing.

न त्वरितं व्रजेत्

5. In walking do not be brisk but graceful with a dignified bearing.

न हसेत् अनपावृता

6. Do not laugh aloud, or in a manner that is not in keeping with feminine grace.

7. Do not keep the company of women whose influence may be undesirable.

Manu has advised women to desist from the following:

Drinking intoxicants; keeping undesirable company; being away from the husband for long periods, or needless roaming; sleeping during the day; staying at the homes of other people.

Poet Kalidas has said that a woman should not stay for a long period even at her parents' home. It has an undesirable effect on one's character, progress and duty.

Maha Rishi Kanva gave the following advice to his daughter, Sakuntala, when she was leaving the hermitage:

वत्से ! त्वमिदानीम् अनुशासनीयासि

Daughter, as you are now ready to go to the home of your husband:

शुश्रूषस्व गुरून्

Serve the elders such as your mother-in-law, father-in-law and your brother-in-law and his wife.

प्रियसखीवृत्तिं नु नारी जने

Show all the ladies of the house, who are equal to you, your friendliness.

पत्युर्विप्रकृताऽपि रोषणतया मास्म प्रतीपं गमः

Do not become guilty of a wrong action even when the husband is at fault.

भूयिष्ठं भव दक्षिणा परिजने भाग्येष्वनुत्सेकिनी

When one is blessed with abundance, acts of charity towards the less privileged must not be forgotten.

In this way the daughter-in-law of the house assumes the title of *grihini*. There is a fine *sukti* in the *Atharva Veda*:

अधः पश्यस्व, मोपरि, संतरांपादकौ हर ।
मा ते कशप्लकौ दृशन्, स्त्री हि ब्रह्मा बभूविथ ॥ (अथर्व)

Adhah pashyaswa, mopari,
santram padkau har;
ma te kashap-lakau drishan,
stri hi brahma babhoovitha. (Atharva)

Always be humble with the head bowed down; do not be proud: walk with dignity, without exposing the limbs; a woman is brahma in the yajna of progeny. As Brahma is responsible for the success of the yajna, it is the duty of the wife to perform the household yajna. According to the Vedas the following blessings have been accorded to the new bride:

साम्राज्ञी श्वसुरे भव, साम्राज्ञी श्वश्रवां भव ।
ननान्दरि सम्राज्ञी भव, सम्राज्ञी अधिदेवृषु ॥ (अथर्व १४/१/४४)

Samrajyi shwashure bhava samrajyi
shwashrwa bhwa;
nanandri samrajyi adhi devrishu. (Atharva 14/1/44)

Perform your duties towards your father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law and his wife, husband's elder brother and his wife in a manner that would earn you their respect. Just as a queen controls and reigns, you too could take control of the

household duties and be a queen in your own palace. It has been said:

"Whether he be your husband's father or elder brother, husband's sister-in-law or his revered mother, treat them as your own father and mother and receive their blessings, my loving daughter. Treat like a son his younger brother and like a daughter the younger brother's wife. These are the best known jewels in life of the good and gentle girl."

Daughter, as you get accustomed to the duties just mentioned you will be accorded an honoured position in the house.

The stage in life that you have entered is known as the *grihastha.* The head of the house is the *grihi* (householder). The success of the home is dependent on the *grihini* (housewife). It is not the brick and mortar that make the home, it is the ideal wife who is responsible for this accomplishment.

न गृह गृहमित्याहुर् गृहिणी गृहमुच्यते । (महाभारत)

Na griham grihamityahurgrihini grihamuchyate. It is common knowledge that a married person has a better chance to rent a house. The landlord usually asks the question whether a person is married or not. If you answer in the affirmative, you have no difficulty in securing the house. Without a wife there is no confidence.

It is a fact that when a wife is away from her home for a few days, the house is quiet and everything is in disorder. The husband looks for the clothes and finds them all mixed up. One thing is found and another is somehow missing; it is time for him to leave for the office. What about breakfast ? There is no time to cook. Something is taken hurriedly and he is on his

way. What is the cause of all this inconvenience ? Yes, without the housewife a home becomes like a jungle;

गृहं तु गृहिणीहीनं अरण्यसदृशं मतम् ।

but in the care of a housewife even a simple hut becomes a place of comfort and order. In the company of Sita, Rama spent thirteen years of exile with great joy and pleasure, but in the absence of Sita the last twelve months became a time of great stress and strain. The hut of shrubs at Panchwati became like Ayodhya just because Sita was there, while in Sita's absence Ayodhya looked deserted. Damyanti had given great courage to Nal in such words as:

वृक्षमूलेऽपि दयिता यस्य तिष्ठति तद् गृहम् ।
प्रासादोऽपि तया हीनः कान्तारादतिरिच्यते ।।

महाभारत १२/४५/६

"Why worry if your kingdom has been taken from you ? You still have me. You will see that this very trunk of a tree will become a palace for us."

The great Pratap with the help of his wife faced the undefeated Akbar. Even bread made from wild grain by his wife was tastier than the palace food served on golden plates. Manu has spoken thus about the duties of a wife:

सदा प्रहृष्टया भाव्यम् ।

"A wife must always be happy; particularly when the husband is expected at home she should be ready to meet him with a smile:

गृहकार्येषु दक्षया ।

The house must be absolutely clean and tidy and every thing must be in its place. Even in the dark it must be easy to find a thing. The kitchen must reflect cleanliness and order. All the utensils must be clean and kept in their proper places. The food and grains must always be covered."

It has been said that the goddess of wealth abandoned the asuras (barbaric tribes) because their womenfolk failed to keep household discipline. The rats, cats, dogs and owls helped themselves freely with food. The women used unclean fingers for the ghee and the pickles. Away from such a situation, it is the duty of a cultured wife to observe hygienic conditions and to give her attention to the smallest of things.

सुसंस्कृतोऽपस्करा

Susanskritopaskarya

It is essential for a housewife, whilst being tidy in her work, also to know the art of cooking. She must be perfect in her judgement in order that she may not have to use weights and measures for her ingredients, but simply from experience she would be able to judge how much salt or sugar is required. The food must be so well prepared that all members of the family would be delighted to partake of it. Let it not be said that the food had no salt, or extra salt. Watch the fire so that there is no extra heat which may burn the food; also avoid less heat or the *rotis* will remain half-cooked. Cook with exactness so that there is no waste.

It is said that the asuras lost their properties because of the inability and carelessness of their wives, Stale food was always served; food left overnight was served in the morning and the food that was left over in the morning was served in the evening. Their women also did not know the art of cooking; they showed ignorance about the different types of food and the manner in which they should be served, with no fixed time for the meals. The ingredients were not mixed in correct proportions with the result that the health of the family was endangered.

It is necessary for a housewife to have a knowledge of domestic science, with a particular emphasis on

cookery. Manu has said:

Susankritopaskarya. With the knowledge of good cooking the bride assumes the role of a housewife.

Thrift and economy व्यये चामुक्तहस्तया

A housewife has to learn how to budget her housekeeping for the purpose of economy. One must not spend without exercising care so that other necessities in the house are found wanting. A housewife should be so meticulous in her housekeeping that at any time when an article is required it could be produced. This does not mean that you must purchase without discretion and use up the goods lavishly. It is the duty of a housewife to have all the essential commodities at home and to use them with economy. Once again one has to be careful not to be unduly strict so that when the need arises the housewife may hesitate to produce the things required. Therefore it is said:

Do not sit and be like the foolish honey bee,
Which has never learnt to give or itself take;
Within your means charity should be given,
But watch its not the undeserving beggar's basin,
The deceiver is given milk again and again,
While the old sannyasi is served with roasted agrain.
Also let not there arise such a situation,
That you give all and be left in starvation.

A woman is given the name *grihini* because she is handed over to her husband who accepts her hand. Just a moment ago the bridegroom in accepting the hand of the bride said, गृभ्णामि ते सौभगत्वाय हस्तम् *gribhnami te soubhagatwaya hastam*, meaning, "I am

accepting your hand for happiness and prosperity." It is on such an occasion that a girl becomes the real *grihini*, or housewife.

The bridegroom does not only accept the hand but also accepts the heart, intellect and mind of his wife. And did not both of you symbolise this by touching the heart of each other and also by repeating the words:

मम व्रते ते हृदय दधामि मम चित्तमनुचित्तं ते अस्तु
मम वाचमेकमना जुषस्व प्रजापतिस्त्वा नियुनक्तु मह्यम्

Mama vrate te hridayam dadhami, Mama chitmanuchittam te astu;

Mama vachamekamana jushaswa prajapatistwa niyunaktu mahyam.

By accepting each other the wife becomes *grihini* husband, *grihini*, and where the husband has complete authority over his wife and in a similar manner the wife has the right of complete authority over the affairs of her husband. It is for this reason that the wife takes possession of the entire being of the husband.

She is the mistress of his health, wealth and mind. And for her husband she is the only wife and for the wife he is the sole master. The *Atharva Veda* has also pronounced:

मृदुर्निर्मन्युः केवली प्रियवादिनी अनुव्रता। (अथर्व ३।२५।४)

Mridurnirmanyuh kewali nriyavadini anuvrata, which expresses the expectations of the husband polite, without anger, chaste and faithful wife. Similarly, the wife says, "You are my only one. You

belong to me alone and no one else." This is the meaning of words :

यथासो मम केवलो नान्यासां कीर्तयाश्चमा

अथर्व ३/३७/१

yathaso mama kewlo nanyasam kirtayashchama. Even to take another woman's name would be regarded as evil. The mutual pledges made are intended to produce the kind of oneness between the two, that would last unto death.

अन्योन्यस्याव्यभीचारो भवेदामरणान्तिकः ।
एष धर्म ममासेनज्ञेयः स्त्रीपुंसयो परः ।

मनु ९–१०१

Kaiwalya, meaning "one and no other", refers to a situation where the feelings of "I" and "you" do not exist and just oneness pervades. This state of being is often used with reference to a spiritual attainment but it is hardly understood when it refers to a wordly matter. But in the *grihastha ashram, kaiwalya* indicates the oneness between the husband and wife, as a veritable truth. At this stage there is no question of mine and thine between the husband and wife—both reach a state called *kaiwalya*, or oneness. In order to illustrate such a state four adjectives are used, two preceding and another two following the word *kaiwalya*. *Mridu* and *nirmanyu* are the two adjectives that precede, while *privavadini* and *anuvrata* are the other two that follow. The meaning of *mridu* is affable or gentle; *nirmanyu* means having a temperament free of anger; *priyavadini* denotes sweetness of speech; while *anuvrata* refers to family tradition and austerity. These four qualities taken together lead to the attainment of *kaiwalya*, or spiritual oneness.

These are the adornments, dear daughter, which you must regard as your duty to acquire, to preserve

and to encourage others to follow. Therefore, tie a knot of these qualities.

If for some reason your husband's sister-in-law did scold.
And some members to you harsh words told;
Or even if you are cursed by the old granny,
At such time do not lose patience but be wary.
Do not reply to their hurtful words;
Do not take notice of their awful blurts;
An answer never calms one's temper,
It only adds fuel to fire.
There is no reply better than silence,
Here is an end to critics and comments.
Silence alone could a hundred capture,
For silence to peace is a dear sister;
If mother-in-law has said a harsh word,
It will be unkind to be offended;
To swallow it quietly is the best;
It is bitter medicine put to test,
For in this way there will be no dissension
And after a while all will be forgotten.
If this is done there will be understanding,
Then like a mother they will to you be loving.
If you could achieve this high ideal
You will truly become mistress and jewel.
You will give command to the home;
Even a sister-in-law will respect your reign.
If words could be sweet and pleasanter,
Then the fire of weapons will be like a flower.
Where there are daughters and daughters-in-law,
Assume that among them goodness will be in store.
Blessed are those that have sweet tongue;
For, to obtain recognition, a way would have begun.

पत्नी त्वमसि धर्मणा अहं गृहपतिस्तव: (ऋ० १०/८५/३६)

Patni twamasi dharmana aham griha patistawa

During the wedding ceremony when the groom accepted your hand he used the words of the Mentra "husband and wife"; he regarded dharma as being the basis of the new relationship. Groom said, "*patni twamasi dharmana aham griha patistawa.*"

You will notice that the word *dharma* is in the centre of this mantra in order to bind both the nouns that refer to husband and wife. The groom states here. "If I am the husband and you are the wife, it is for the sake of dharma and not for beauty or for wealth." Therefore in the Vedic dharma the words *pati* (husband) and *patni* (wife) always have the qualifying word *dharma*, such as *dharmapati* and *dharmapatni*

Protection of dharma

The roots of the sanskrit words *pati* and *patni* is the same PA meaning "to protect" Pati means Protector and Patni also means protector. The question arises, to protect what? Well, it is simple. Both the words are preceded by *dharma,* which naturally refers to the protection of *dharma*. There both, husband and wife, pledge to protect dharma. When man found that being alone he was weak for this task, of Protection of Dharma, he sought the help of a woman and made her a Partner In this way it becomes the duty of the wife to realise that it is her responsibility to help her husband. in carrying out the vows of his dharma. When the King Janaka offered the hond of his daughter Sita to Rama he said, "*Iyam sita mama suta saha–dharma-chari tawa*" इयं सीता मम सुता सहधर्मचरी तव।

meaning. "This my daughter Sita will carry out the duties according to your dharma." Relationships

depending only on looks and wealth do not become permanent, only those based on Dharma alone are permanent. Therefore, daughter, in order to fulfil the duties of a wife you have to protect the dharma of your husband.

If a household is compared to a chariot you play an important role being one of the carriers of the yoke. The word *vadhu* (*vah–dhu*) is applicable here. To attend to the orderliness of every item at home, you will be called *grihini*, and when accompanying your husband for the duties of dharma, you will be known as *patni*. Without the presence of a wife even a yajna is not fruitful. Arya Rama's *ashwa medha yajna* could not continue until a symbolic Sita of gold was placed next to him.

Therefore in all important duties it is the wife who plays the role that leads to success. Panini Muni, in his *Patyur no Yajyasanyoge* पत्युर्नो यज्ञसंयोगे ४/१/३३ has said that a woman has been given the name *patni* for the sole purpose that she may be helpful in all the duties that pertain to yajna.

The wife is the centre of a home. It is through her that a man is able to fulfil the duties of parenthood. She is the one to continue with the traditions of the elders. With her help a husband successfully performs the yajnas and attains liberation, he fulfils his obligation to his forefathers.

In this world of many difficulties it is the wife who provides the courage and strength to her husband. A wife is the centre of dharma, wealth and pleasure. She is the raft in the ocean of life. A loving spouse is a true friend of a husband in his loneliness. She provides the repose when the road is difficult. Only a married man is trusted in his social life.

When Yudhisthir had gambled and lost all his possessions in a game of dice and looked despondent, it was Draupadi who rescued him from the helpless situation. It is the duty of a wife to protect her husband in all circumstances. She should not allow her husband to be humiliated.

In the Mahabharata, Shakuntala, in stressing the importance of a wife, said that just as a man who has been perspiring profusely, finds comfort by bathing in cool water, similarly a man who is afflicted by some mental or physical pain, finds peace and solace in the presence of his wife. A man should never give any cause for unhappiness to his wife for she alone has the ability to provide marital affection and to create an atmosphere where prosperity reigns. She has always been the source of new life. Even the Rishis have not had any influence over procreation as this was ordained to be within the power of a woman alone.

There could be no better, or more beautiful words in which to describe the importance of a wife than the words uttered by the groom just a while ago; they are still fresh in our ears:

Yasyam bhootam samabhawat,
yasyam vishwamidam jagat:
tamadya gatham gasyami,
strinam yaduttamam yashah.

यस्यां भूतं समभवत् यस्यां विश्वमिदं जगत् ।
तामद्य गाथां गास्यामि स्त्रीणांयदुत्तमं यश: ॥

Duty of a wife

Daughter, I am now going to explain you some duties pertaining to a wife. The first duty of a wife is to

serve her husband. The most important duties according to Shastra's are to serve her husband and to be faithful to him. According to Shankha the benefits a wife will derive by serving her husband in a proper manner will always exceed the benefits derived from performing yajnas, observing fasts and giving alms, etc. Sita's example shows that there is no greater devotion for a wife than serving her husband. Draupadi revealed to Satyabhama the secret of her influence over Yudhisthir. She said, "I have always been obedient to him without showing any pride, and I always considered his views. I have always tried to avoid displeasing him either in speech or my demeanour. I have seen to his needs first even in such matters as bathing, eating and resting. I do not eat the things he dislikes. In serving him, the day and night becomes one to me. I wake up in the morning long before him and in the night I go tol bed after him."

In the traditional Aryan family Sita has set the greatest example of a wife's duty towards her husband. When it was ordered that Rama should go to the forest and live in exile for fourteen years he was not in favour of the weak and tender Sita accompanying him and being exposed to the hard life of the jungle. But contrary to Rama's wish, she was prepared to face the greatest hardships and obstacles of the jungle. She said, "O Raghava, if you have decided to go to the forest, I shall lead the path, tramping on the thorns and the sharp *kusha* grass. Instead of high seats and positions and flying in aerial cars, it is better to be at the feet of one's husband and to serve him in all his difficulties. Even if I have to be given heaven, I shall never be happy there without you." Then Rama tried to bring to her notice the presence of dangerous animals in the jungle, such as lions, tiger, and wild elephants: there were also venomous reptiles. But Sita replied,

"If my lord and husband is with me, why should I be afraid of these animals and reptiles. All the wild trees and thorny shrubs that come in my way will be like cottonwool to me. Whatever you have with you is like heaven to me, but without you whatever I have will be like hell."

When darkness falls even the shadow leaves you, but Sita never left Rama. After many thousands of years, even today the glory of Sita shines as a living example of Aryan womanhood.

Daughter, it is in the light of this example that you should mould your future. Your duty towards your husband should be uppermost in your mind.

It is your duty to serve at your husbands's feet,
For the reward is always a fruit that is sweet.
Neither Ganga, Yamuna, Saryu, or Reva you need,
Supreme bliss is in the service of husband indeed.
One who worships her husband will prosper,
And all troubles that may come will disappear.

Pativratya dharma

Daughter, besides serving your husband, there is another aspect of dharma known as *pativratya*, or single-minded devotion to one's husband. Once a girl is married, there could be no question of change even if her husband has his own imperfections; the thought of another person should never enter her mind. When Savitri was told by her father that her chosen husband, Satyavan, had a very short time to live, she replied, "I have made my choice; whether he has a short life and whether he is virtuous or not. I can only make up my mind but once, not twice." (Mahabharata – 1/110/14). Her father respected her decision.

Ideal woman

Daughter, here again Sita stands out as a shining example. At Lanka, during her ordeal with the cruel Ravana and the women of his palace, Sita remained steadfast. She displayed her firmness and protected her dharma. She said, "Whether he be weak or without a kingdom, my husband is my guru, our lord. I am attached to Rama just as Suwarchala was to Surya, Sukanya to Chyavan, Shashi to Indra, Arundhati to Vasishtha, Lopamudra to Agastya, Savitri to Satyavan, Madayanti to Saudas, Keshini to Sagar, and Damyanti to Nal."

To get heat from the moon, coolness from fire and sweetened water from the sea may be possible, but to get Sita give up her purity and truthfulness was impossible. All the wealth of Ravana did not attract her; all the threats made by him did not frighten her. She upheld the highest form of dignity and attained the position of a goddess of absolute purity. Her outstanding patience, her unequalled courage: her unparallelled devotion to her husband and her rare virtue have remained a source of inspiration for all times.

Daughter, you could also bathe in this pure fountain and attain bliss.

Duty of a husband

Daughter, where it is necessary for a wife to serve her husband and to uphold the dharma of her husband, it is equally essential for a husband to uphold these two principles. It is his duty to provide security, protect, support and give happiness to his wife at all times and to uphold the traditional dharma. Manu has briefly explained that the highest duty of a husband and wife is to be true to one another and to fulfil all the mutual promises until the time of death. Even the *Atharva Veda* has pronounced that a husband and wife should

be true to each other. It is not only the wife who has her duties but the husband as well has similar duties to perform. He should never forget her and think of another woman. This reciprocal behaviour forms the true basis of the dharma of both the husband and wife.

Security for a wife

The protection of a wife by the husband is a universal law and a biological truth. It is for the sake of self-preservation that the protection of the wife is absolutely necessary. Even among the birds one would find a species where the female bird sits on the eggs for hatching while the male bird stands guard to protect her and to provide her with food during this period. If this were not done then such a species would soon be extinct. Among human beings as well, it is also for the purpose of survival that the protection of the female is obligatory. A person who is not capable of protecting a woman is a coward and is destined to hell.

Protection of a wife

Together with security there should also be protection. It means protection from enemies and other natural disasters. It was to the shame of Maharaj Yudhisthir that he failed to protect Draupadi when she was being humiliated by Duryodhana. In spite of this, Draupadi was able to save Yudhisthir and the Pandavas from slavery. Duryodhan noticed this weakness in Yudhisthir and called him a coward. This was a great insult to Yudhisthir.

Defeat of a wife means utter defeat

According to Manu, by the protection of a wife man is able to protect his progeny, his family, his character, the soul and his dharma. According to the sage Haareet where a wife is not protected, utter loss is

the consequence. When a wife is degraded the family is degraded and the defeat of the family brings suffering to the children. When this happens the traditions of the elders and the previous generations are all lost. With the loss of tradition, dharma suffers, and when dharma suffers, the suffering of the soul follows, with the result that everything is finally lost.

Always be sweet to your wife

Besides giving her security and protecting her, it is the duty of the husband to be kind, polite and sweet to his wife. According to Vidur it is the duty of a husband at all times to treat his wife with equality, to utter kind words and to be polite to her. (5/38/10). Emphasis has also been laid on the fact that a husband should never argue with his wife, or utter unkind words, or be harsh. Such persons are said to end in hell. (5/37/3).

Wife to be honoured

It is not sufficient just to respect a wife; it is equally important to treat her well and to give her the honour that she rightly deserves. Women are worthy of worship. They provide the beauty in the house (Mahabharata 5/35/10). Bhishma says, "Women are worthy of praise. O men, do honour them. It is through women that we accomplish the desire of dharma, love and a son." The birth of a child, its upbringing and its maturing are all dependent on the wife. Therefore, she has to be honoured and respected for success to be attained.

Manu says that where women are honoured the whole family attains a brightness. Where the women are not respected, the whole family is in darkness. When a woman is not treated well and is not happy, the future of their child is affected. To make a marriage successful it is the duty of the husband to provide all

the essentials to his wife so that at no time she loses her glamour and attraction. This plays a very important part in the happiness of the couple and the family.

Daughter, this presentation will never be complete if some mention is not made of the type of behaviour that is most appropriate for the husband and wife. According to the Vedas a friendly behaviour, *sakha bhav*, सखा भव is of great importance. A husband and wife are great friends of each other. This has been shown in the seven steps taken during the marriage ceremony. The groom says, "Come and take the seven steps with me for only then will you be my friend."

Seven steps

The seven steps are so important that if this part were left out of the ceremony, the wedding cannot be recognised. The seventh step which is the last one signifies friendship. The first six steps are taken to bind this seventh step of friendship. The idea of friendship is firmly secured when the first six steps are taken together.

The groom recited, *Ishe ek padhi bhava* इषे एकपदी भव and took the first step for the attainment of food for without it the bond of friendship cannot be secured. In the same way there was the desire for health and this led to the second step with the recital of *Oorje dwipadi bhava*, ऊर्जे द्विपदी भव. In the sincerity of their friendship these two steps form the very foundation, one signifying food and the other health. They also mean desire and courage.

The third step is just as nccessary: *Rayasposhaya tripadi bhava*, रायस्पोषाय त्रिपदी भव. It means wealth and how to economise. The basic study of economics is very important, because if one spends beyond one's capacity financial problems soon follow. We must spend accord-

ing to our means. It is desirable that the wealth acquired should contribute to one's health and happiness, but meanness must be avoided in order that no physical or social harm may befall one. In the acquisition of wealth theres hould be no exploitation of others. Wealth that is obtained by means of honesty should be used for the benefit of all. *Mayobhavjaya chatushpadi bhava*, मयोभवाय चतुष्पदी भव. The first three steps having been taken the bridegroom urges the bride to take the fourth step with him for the purpose of happiness, as without this the steps taken earlier would have no meaning.

After having taken the steps for the four initial requirements, the need for the fifth step arises. The bridegroom proceeds to take this step for the purpose of progeny. If there remains any form of unfulfilment, there would not only be mutual conflict, but also quarrels, leading to a state where the life of the householder becomes ineffectual and futile. If there is grain at home; if the body is healthy; if there is money in the bank; and if there is some happiness in the family, there yet remains a void if there is no offspring, for then everything else becomes meaningless. While various things in life contribute to happiness, there is nothing equal to the birth of a child to provide the maximum family exultation. The great poet, Bhavabhuti, has described a child as that which truly creates the bond of affection that ought to exist between the husband and wife.

The success of the five steps already taken is still dependent on the sixth step which is of particular importance. Therefore the bridegroom beseeches the bride to take the sixth step which specifies a regimen according to season.

Thereafter he persuades her to take the seventh step for the purpose of enduring friendship. Then there

will be no departure from our principles of life. The result will be peace and harmony.

So this is my gift *uphar* उपहार, to you which in the words of the poet Tulsidas is great blessing:

"Daughter, may your married life be everlasting. And be just as the Yamuna and Ganga which keep flowing."

बेटी अचल रहे सुहाग तुम्हारा। जब लों गंग यमुन की धारा।।

Finally, with the golden ornaments adorning the body; with my gift of advice ahd wisdom in mind; with the deep affection of your mother and father, brother and sister-in-law; and with the love of the younger brother and the children, when you take leave from us dear, all our hearts will be full and the cups of the eyes would overflow. What to speak of others, a person like me will also have the throat full. It will be difficult to utter just another word. The tears of love will draw a curtain over the eyes and would obstruct the vision. My position will be like that of Rishi Kanwa when he parted with his dear Shakuntala. Even with all this, in wishing you farewell at a time when you are about to leave for your husband's home, we do feel some relief because we understand that a daughter is the possession of another, It is said.

Artho hi kanya parkiya eva thamadya
sampreshya parigrahituh
jato mamayam vishadah prakamanm
pratyarpita nyasa ivantaratma.

अर्थो हि कन्या परकीय एव तामद्य संप्रेष्य परिग्रहीतुः।
जातो ममायं विशदः प्रकामं प्रत्यर्पितन्यास इवान्तरात्मा।

शाकु० ४।२२

Hai jagdeesh se prarthna yah hamari
Suhagan rahe too sada he dulari

kate sheel vrat dhar kar umra sari
sati gunwati ho pati ki ho pyari
badhe dampati—prem ka gyan nishdin
rahe do shariron me ik jan nishdin
main "Bethab" hoon ki samaya ne rulaya
thathapi main khush hoon ki yah vakt aaya
vida karke tujhako hai santosh paya
ki tha meri raksha me ye dhan paraya
huwa aaj wah dhan dhani ke hawale
bas ab wah sambhale ki ishwar sambhale

है जगदीश से प्रार्थना यह हमारी,
सुहागन रहे तू सदा हे दुलारी।
कटे शील-व्रत धार कर उम्रसारी,
सतीगुणवती हो, पति की हो प्यारी।
बढ़े दम्पति-प्रेम का ज्ञान निश दिन,
रहे दो शरीरों में इकजान निश दिन।
मैं 'बेताब' हूं कि समय ने रुलाया,
तथापि मैं खुश हुं कि यह वक्त आया।
विदा करके तुझ को है सन्तोष पाया,
कि था मेरी रक्षा में यह धन पराया।
हुआ आज वह धन-धनी के हवाले,
बस अब यह सम्भाले कि ईश्वर सम्भाले —'बेताब'

Daughter, when you take leave of us and go together with your husband, full of enthusiasm, to his sweet home, you will find the daughter-in-law of the house and your mother-in-law (like your own mother) awaiting your arrival and to welcome you they will reach out their hands to help you alight from the bridal chariot. At that moment your beloved husband will draw the veil covering your face and say:

Sumangaleeriyam vadhurimam sameta pashyata
soubhagyamasyai datva yathastam viparetana

Rig. 10/85/33.

सुमंगलीरियं बधूरिमां समेत पश्यत।
सौभाग्यमस्यै दत्वा याथास्तं विपरेतन॥ ऋ० १०।८५।३३

"Look, I have brought the most beautiful bride; do give her, all of you, your blessings." Then all present will bless you with the following mantra of the Vedas:

Sumangali prartananee grihanam
Susheva patye shwashuraya shambhoo
Syona shwashrvai pragrihan visheman.—(Atha. 16/2/26)

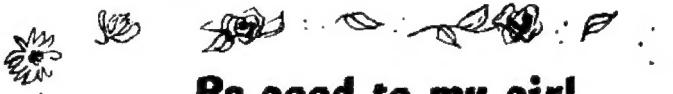
सुमंगली प्रतरणी गृहाणां सुशेवा पत्ये श्वशुराय शम्भुः ।
म्योना श्वश्रूबै प्रगृहान् विशेमान् । (अथर्व : १६/२/२६)

In our home has entered a ***vadhu*** (bride) who is blessed; who will command our home; a loving partner for her husband; for her father-in-law denoting peace and for her mother-in-law the giver of happiness. And we give you this blessing:

Om saubhagyamastu Om shubham bhavatu

ओ३म् सौभाग्यमस्तु । ओ३म् शुभंभवतु ।

May your future and this union be everlasting.
MAY ALL BE WELL.



Be good to my girl

BE good to my girl. That's all I ask. She now belongs to you . . . Be kind to my lass. Take care of her, for I still love her too . . . My daughter always—yes, I know. My daughter, but your wife. I knew she'd have to go some day. I don't complain. That's Life.

The only thing that matters is that she is going to be—loved and happy. That is all that really counts with me . . . So upon this day of days when hearts are in a whirl—I want to say just this once more: be good to her, my girl.

PATIENCE STRONG